



III.C.

TO: Long Range Planning Committee

VIA: Brandol Harvey, AICP, Chief of Planning

FROM: Christopher Lawrence, AICP, Comprehensive Planner

DATE: October 26, 2004

RE: Minutes from the October 14, 2004 Long Range Planning Committee Meeting

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**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The Long Range Planning Committee met on Thursday, October 14, 2004, at 12:00 pm. Members present were Lancaster, Newcomb, Neumann, and Lewis. Lawrence represented staff.

**II. PUBLIC ADDRESS**

None

**III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

The election of Chair and Vice-Chair was completed. Mr. Jones and Ms. Newcomb were elected as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. Vote 4-0.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

a. Freshwater Biomonitoring – Service Learning Opportunity

Mr. Paul Angermeier, a researcher at Virginia Tech, presented an opportunity for a Service Learning Project. In cooperation with Virginia Tech's Fish and Wildlife research unit, a possible project may include research, documenting, and reporting on the condition of Tom's Creek. The project may produce information that can be used by the town in its work towards water and creek quality initiatives.

Ms. Meredith Tremel stated that the project could be tied into the town's current Tom's Creek studies regarding the quality of the creek.

The committee supported the project in concept and recommended that the town work with Virginia Tech to develop a beneficial project for the university as well as the town.

b. Tom's Creek Riparian Assessment

Ms. Lori Lester, Water Program Technician for the Planning and Engineering Department, gave an overview of the Tom's Creek Riparian Assessment. DEQ participates in the project by helping establish the locations where the water quality assessment will occur. The Town of Blacksburg hired a consultant to complete a bug assessment for a baseline to assess habitat and the current health of Tom's Creek. The habitat assessment includes the riparian zone which includes bends in the creek, velocity, and ten different items for assessment to determine the health of the creek. The study concluded that Tom's Creek falls between pristine and impaired depending on the specific location of the assessment. An area on the McDonald farm was the worst area. A section upstream from the farm was the healthiest. This was due to the location, which is fairly inaccessible to walkers and there was no livestock in the area.

The Committee supported an additional study to be completed during the next year. The study should include a full stream analysis and determine the reason why the sections of the creek are in a certain condition.

c. Rights-of-way Vacation Policy and history

Mr. Lawrence reviewed the Comprehensive Plan's Vacation policy for rights-of-way. In addition, he reviewed vacation applications and actions for the previous four years.

The Committee directed staff to draft an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan that would specifically state that the town's policy is to retain all rights-of-way within town. The amendment would highlight the importance of rights-of-way to the town's overall transportation network and their potential future use.

Mr. Lawrence stated that he would draft a policy statement to include the Committees recommendation and present it at the November meeting for review and consideration by the committee for inclusion in the 2005 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process.

d. Comprehensive Plan Annual Amendment Process

Mr. Lawrence highlighted the upcoming amendment process and requested that committee members review and present staff with any recommended amendments at the November meeting.

**V. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 pm. The next meeting of the Long Range Planning Committee is scheduled for November 10, 2004 at 12:00 pm in the Town Council Conference Room.